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General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

10th Meeting
Thursday, 29 September 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy ..... (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Address by Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Moldova, His Excellency Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Snegur *(spoke in Moldovan; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Allow me at the outset, Sir, to extend to you my cordial and sincere congratulations on the occasion of your election as President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that your competence and active cooperation with Member States will pave the way for a successful and fruitful session.

At the same time, I should like to express my deep gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally for the outstanding work accomplished in his capacity as President of the previous session.

I should also like to express sentiments of our utmost consideration to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose activities in redefining the role of this prestigious Organization in this changing world enjoy the appreciation and support of the Republic of Moldova.

I am honoured to represent the Republic of Moldova for the second time at this rostrum. Nearly three years ago, in March 1992, I expressed gratitude to Member States for their considerable support extended to my country by recognizing it at the international level as an independent State and by accepting it into the large family of the United Nations.

Looking back over these years, I should like to note that the Republic of Moldova gained its independence in a complex political context in which the aspirations for freedom and democracy of nations led to the collapse of totalitarian regimes and the emergence of new States.

Unfortunately, those positive changes were followed by negative tendencies, such as threats to subregional and regional security. Moreover, we are witnessing the reappearance and aggravation of some older problems connected to national minorities, territorial disputes, the presence of foreign military troops on the territory of new independent States, the intensification of some separatist tendencies, often inspired and directed from abroad, and so on.

Under these circumstances, the state of affairs is more complex than we could imagine. The euphoria that

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followed the events in Eastern Europe and on the territory of the former Soviet Union generated in some the opinion that the two main objectives - democratization of society and building a market-oriented economy, both compulsory for the institutional reintegration of new States into the democratic world - would not face serious obstacles. Now, however, we find that there is a desynchronization and even a time disparity between those two objectives. I would say that that disparity is even more evident in the new independent States that emerged as a result of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. In this sense, the Republic of Moldova is no exception.

The situation requires a larger conceptual and practical effort to correct such desynchronizations. It is obvious that the United Nations cannot remain indifferent to the difficulties that confront the countries in transition. In this connection, we consider that the Secretary-General's intention to draw up an agenda for development is particularly opportune, and we welcome it. In our opinion the assistance granted by the United Nations to young States should be provided on the basis of the concrete conditions prevailing in every specific country and the programmes being elaborated in each.

Located at the intersection of the geopolitical interests of some great Powers, Moldova was incorporated into a State and political entity in which democratic values were meaningless. The experience of Moldova is different from that of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, where the communist "freezer" functioned for only four decades and something was preserved from the previous democratic development. That is why we had to begin the process of democratization and market transition almost from the very beginning. The deepening of the economic crisis can be explained to a large extent by the fact that we do not have at our disposal sufficient financial and energy resources or the raw materials necessary to support these reforms.

In addition, our country's potential was affected this year by a natural disaster of which the international community has already been informed. We suffered human losses and considerable material damage, and we had to mobilize every effort and all resources to subdue the elements and overcome their consequences. Our voice was heard by the international community. I should like to express my sincere gratitude to the international organizations and countries that granted humanitarian assistance to the Republic of Moldova and my sincere gratitude to the Members of the United Nations for their understanding and sympathy, which they manifested by adopting the resolution (48/266) entitled "Emergency assistance to the Republic of Moldova" during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Over the three years that have elapsed since the proclamation of the independence of the Republic of Moldova, on 27 August 1991, our decision to develop democracy and a State of law with a market economy has remained firm, in spite of transitional difficulties. This firm decision is being realized through our efforts to create the necessary legislative premises for promoting reforms, including privatization, for transforming the economy to one based on market relations and for ensuring respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The recent parliamentary elections held on a multi-party basis were free and fair, and this was confirmed by international observers. Another significant event was the adoption of the Constitution, which paves the way for the real independence and democracy chosen by the people of the Republic of Moldova.

The Republic of Moldova has ratified a series of important international Conventions on human rights. We have consequently undertaken new commitments to change the internal juridical framework in accordance with international standards. Measures have been taken to guarantee the rights of the national minorities, some of which were on the edge of losing their identity during the Soviet regime. Many provisions of Moldovan legislation are aimed at protecting the right to retain, develop and utilize the language spoken on the territory of the country. Under the new Constitution, special forms of autonomy may be granted to some human settlements in the east and south of the Republic of Moldova in accordance with special juridical statutes adopted under the constitutional laws. For example, a draft for such a statute for the southern region is being examined in the Parliament.

We consider that the good intentions of the Government of the Republic of Moldova and its concrete and positive actions represent essential premises for the elimination of sources of tension. It is our strong belief that they can be eliminated, and with less controversy, not through the use of force but in a peaceful way through negotiation and dialogue; as an old saying teaches us: "It is better to have a year of negotiations than a day of war". This is true, since any armed conflict provokes human and material losses.

The Republic of Moldova is and will remain fully committed to constructive negotiations, on the condition, of course, that all the parties involved demonstrate political will and common sense.

At the same time we cannot ignore the fact that in spite of reasonable compromises made by Chisinau, tendencies of separatism still exist in eastern regions, and human rights continue to be flagrantly violated. For example, despite the fact that the Moldovan authorities and several international organizations, including the United Nations, have expressed their deep concern about the situation of the "Ilascu Group", as of today the members of the Group are still illegally detained. Another example is this: the Moldovans from the left bank of the Dniester river are prohibited from using the Latin alphabet in their schooling. The separatist leaders from Tiraspol continue to obstruct the signing of the already-endorsed agreement on the legal status and the modalities and stages of the complete withdrawal of the 14th Army.

I want to emphasize once again that a complete, orderly and unconditional withdrawal of foreign military troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova is the will of our people. This will is clearly reflected in our Constitution, which forbids the deployment of foreign troops on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. In this context, it should be mentioned that the authorities of the Russian Federation show a correct understanding of our position. I would like to underline the important role of the international community, the international organizations, including the United Nations, and especially the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in facilitating the bilateral negotiations.

I avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate Estonia and Latvia on the withdrawal of foreign military troops from their territory and, at the same time, to express our hope that the international community will support the same kind of appropriate and orderly withdrawal of foreign troops in the case of the Republic of Moldova.

I should like to touch upon the subject of separatism and discuss it in a larger perspective. It is well known that many regions of the world are currently affected by separatist tendencies. Respecting the right of nations to self-determination - a fundamental right outlined in international documents - we cannot ignore the fact that this right is often used as a tool serving the interests of certain political groups and, in that context, this right has nothing to do with the legitimate aspirations of people to liberty and national sovereignty.

Today, in my opinion, at the end of the millennium the separatist phenomenon is an extremely negative one, and to ignore it can lead to tragic consequences for many countries - indeed, for the entire world. In such circumstances, can we afford to allow dozens of artificially induced States to emerge as a result of the pressure of certain interested political groups? Will this further the strengthening of international stability and security? We do not believe so. Given that the majority of States have a multi-ethnic configuration, and could be affected by such separatist tendencies, we cannot but emphasize the dangers this might entail. That is why we believe that this kind of separatism - today's deadly world virus - must be condemned by the international community. We think that this issue should be more closely examined, and we hope that the United Nations will give due attention to this matter.

The Republic of Moldova has joined the United Nations as a young European country. Our European aspirations are determined by our geopolitical and cultural affiliations to the European democratic space, and we are linked to it by our Latin heritage also. For us, to be isolated from the European space and its values means to facilitate the re-emergence of some influences from which we suffered painfully in the recent past. That is why our vital and fundamental goal is the integration of our country into Europe. In this context, we firmly look forward to increasing cooperation and linkage with the Council of Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Western European Union (WEU), and the CSCE, including expanding our relations with the European Union, which represents the main guarantee of democratic practices and values.

The implementation of our options depends crucially on the willingness of the economic and political-strategic Euro-Atlantic structures to support Moldova actively.

I think that establishing economic relations with the independent States of the former Soviet Union and joining the Commonwealth of Independent States - where we participate only in the economic structures and are not involved in collective security or political-military cooperation - will not become an obstacle to our gradual integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures. We believe that in these times nobody wants new dividing lines in Europe or in any other part of the world. On the contrary, we need to eliminate those once generated by

the cold war. At the turn of the century, not only Europe but the whole world finds itself in a complex process of transformation. We want to establish new forms of collaboration that would respond to the aspirations and the needs of all States.

The day is approaching when the international community will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. In all these years the United Nations has been - and it remains - the major universal centre for maintaining peace and international security and for mobilizing the efforts of States, in cooperation with regional organizations, towards settling global issues. The Republic of Moldova has the honour to contribute, together with other States, to the implementation of the noble ideals of the World Organization. I am especially pleased to inform the Assembly that a committee for coordinating the activities and manifestations dedicated to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has been created in the Republic of Moldova.

In calling to mind the achievements and successes of the United Nations system, we cannot but mention the fact that so far it has operated under the guidance of a Charter conceived 50 years ago. I think that the new international realities might call for some essential modifications to adapt the provisions of the Charter to these realities.

The Republic of Moldova supports the reforms initiated by the United Nations aimed at improving the efficiency of the Organization and its major bodies.

Our country shares the views expressed by the delegations of many countries within the Open-ended Working Group regarding the issue of fair representation on the Security Council. The Council's composition, its functioning and methods of work should be modified without affecting the efficiency of its activities in its main field, which is ensuring international peace and security.

Taking into account the active role and contribution performed in the United Nations by Germany and Japan and their possibilities of assuming specific responsibilities in keeping international peace and security, Moldova supports the candidatures of these two countries as permanent members of the Security Council. Our position on fair representation on the Security Council is that it is necessary to take into account all regional groups recognized in the United Nations. In this sense, the Republic of Moldova supports the proposal of the Netherlands to grant an additional seat to each geographic group, including countries from Eastern Europe.

Consultations and debates on such an important subject should be supplemented with practical organizational and procedural measures, such as setting up some subsidiary bodies of the Security Council in accordance with Article 29 of the Charter, and increasing and expanding cooperation with the General Assembly and the regional organizations.

At the same time, we consider that the working methods of the most representative body of the United Nations - the General Assembly - could also be modified. We are all interested in directing those activities as much as possible towards consolidating the principles of justice, democracy and development. The delegation of Moldova supports the decisions adopted at the forty-seventh session aimed at increasing the efficiency of the General Assembly and rationalizing the activities of its Commissions.

There is a direct link between peace and security on the one hand and economic and social development on the other. In this new era, when the United Nations is increasing its efforts to maintain international peace and security, we should not forget about the persistence of inequalities and of grave social and economic problems, which affect all countries, particularly those in transition and the developing ones. In this sense, reform of the Organization should include economic and social mechanisms, especially the Economic and Social Council. This reform, already initiated, should be more effective in implementation and be more rational in the utilization of available resources.

In this context, I should like to stress the importance of the two previous sessions of the Commission for Sustainable Development, whose work we hope will maintain and intensify the impulse generated by the Rio de Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development with respect to the rapid implementation of the commitments made in the framework of Agenda 21.

Turning to another matter, I would like to note that the Republic of Moldova is aware of the financial crisis of the Organization. We are not indifferent to this situation, and I would like to assure the Assembly that my country will do its best to fulfil its commitments. The recommendations of the last session of the Committee on Contributions concerning the re-examination and adjustment of the scale of assessments

of Member States reflect more justly States' real capacity to pay. We hope that the General Assembly will take these recommendations into consideration in the spirit of justice and solidarity which characterizes the United Nations.

In conclusion, I express the hope that the constructive atmosphere that characterizes the United Nations will help us to identify the problems faced by the international community and to find the necessary solutions.

The delegation of the Republic of Moldova expresses its readiness to cooperate most actively and efficiently with the delegations of other States in order to achieve the high goals of the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Moldova for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mircea Ion Snegur, President of the Republic of Moldova, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Venetiaan: Our world is moving into a new era which has not yet taken a permanent shape. This process of change entails profound transformations, some of which promote development, the rule of law, respect for human rights and care for the environment, while others present a serious threat to life and to the world itself. During this process cultural, social and political principles which once seemed to be of eternal value are superseded by new ones.

In many parts of the world instability reigns, causing tragedy and chaos.

In these challenging times, Sir, your unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session merits compliments. Your election to this high office is a demonstration of the Member States' confidence in you. The Republic of Suriname is convinced that under Your Excellency's guidance our deliberations during this important year will produce tangible results.

We pay tribute to Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana for the excellent way in which he presided at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

The vital, extraordinary and excellent manner in which Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali fulfils his mission as Secretary-General of the United Nations in these critical times of intensified disputes, war and violence earns our gratitude, admiration and respect. We wish to thank him most heartily and, at the same time, congratulate him on his important role in shaping the future of the international system.

Events during recent years have confronted the international community with the reality that the demise of the confrontational clash of ideologies did not automatically usher in the stability and prosperity to which we all aspire. Immense problems persist in the political, social and economic spheres and at the national, regional and international levels.

We are witnessing the eruption, the continuation and the spreading of severe national and ethnic rivalries, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. These conflicts and disputes have given rise to the emergence of a large number of displaced persons, who are subjected to the worst kind of harassment, starvation and deprivation.

These manifestations are compounded by practices that once again leave a shameful blot on our civilization. The international community cannot close its eyes to these practices or fail to act in the face of such horrifying and unacceptable situations. Such crises, regardless of the various causes and motives from which they may ensue, tend to have in common the fact that masses of innocent women, children and elderly people pay the price and bear the brunt of conflicts and wars.

The real concern is not only the number of victims claimed or the scale of the destruction that may ensue but

also the possibility that the seeds of those conflicts will spread, both in the developed and in the developing countries, in the absence of the attention of a world order capable of containing and addressing their causes.

It is legitimate for the international community to regard these problems as a shared burden and to strive for their peaceful and prompt solution on the basis of practical cooperation. We should in the short term resort to such mechanisms as are deemed practical to come to the immediate rescue of those who are suffering. Furthermore, we should increase our efforts to eliminate the deeprooted causes of the unresolved national conflicts, to ensure the civil and human rights of ethnic minorities and to promote peaceful coexistence through respect for each other's race, colour, ethnicity, religion and sex. If we fail to do so, the suffering will be prolonged and will threaten regional and international peace and security.

As we discuss the issues now confronting our world, we cannot but refer to the importance of building a new reality that aims at the full development of the people's potential through the establishment of peace, the building of democracy and the shaping of sound economies.

We know that it is a difficult process to establish democracy, dependable democratic institutions and a democratic culture. Notwithstanding the commitment or vigour with which our Governments strive to achieve this objective, the process is bound to be slow and full of complications. Suriname is convinced, however, that we must endeavour to reach this goal, led by the perception that the core of democracy, as we see it, is not merely adherence to an ideal system but one of the most important prerequisites for a stable, united and integrated society that can swiftly settle its differences, realize its aspirations and enjoy and preserve its cultural, political and socio-economic achievements.

The commitment of Suriname to the cause of democracy is strengthened by the distressing experience of the rule of dictatorship under which its people had to live some years ago. There are indeed tremendous efforts involved in bringing a democratic system back on track.

Our involvement in the building of a new national political reality establishes a link between us and the regional process of political renewal, in which Governments of the region are faced with the complex task of restoring and safeguarding democracy.

Indeed, in Latin America and the Caribbean, democracy has suffered some severe setbacks.

The problems of Haiti are of particular concern to us. The violent and illegal interruption of the democratic process in this country has led to continued violations of human rights, to increased poverty and to suffering for the Haitian people, as well as to the flight of thousands from their home country. It is against this background that my Government has granted a request to provide a temporary safe haven for Haitian refugees and has pledged its support to the multinational force.

Furthermore, my Government decided to make members of the national army and the police force available to the United Nations mission in Haiti, which, within the framework of the implementation of Security Council resolution 940 (1994), will become operational simultaneously with the restoration of the democratic Government under the leadership of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

My Government's decision to support and participate in the United Nations mission in Haiti was inspired by its conception of regional and international responsibility to contribute to the safeguarding of constitutional democracy in the region.

We believe that our hemisphere is in need of permanent mechanisms to guarantee swift and direct action when democracy is threatened - for example, by the unconstitutional take-over of Governments.

The significant efforts made by the United Nations and the Organization of American States, including the various resolutions adopted, the missions sent to Haiti and the threat of an immediate military intervention, have finally convinced the military leadership to step down not later than 15 October.

In a general sense, we are hopeful that current developments in Haiti, which are the result of initiatives taken within the framework of the United Nations, will lead to a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Suriname wishes to emphasize that all efforts to restore democracy in Haiti will appear to have been in vain if the rich countries do not forthwith pool financial resources in a fund for the reconstruction and development of Haiti.

The developments in South Africa which led to the demise of the abhorrent regime of apartheid and to the establishment of a democratic and non-racist South Africa

have led to the conviction that in the end the rightful struggle of people for justice, equality and majority rule will meet with success. Indeed, the birth of the new South Africa last April has demonstrated that structures imposed by force cannot survive the determination of those who seek justice.

The people and Government of the Republic of Suriname wish to congratulate the people of South Africa and their leaders, especially President Nelson Mandela, on this success, which will have a positive impact on the world community.

We are all greatly indebted to the Special Committee against Apartheid, which for 32 years played a vital role in global efforts to end apartheid. My country is confident that the new Government in South Africa will cope well with the new challenges it faces. We hope that the international community will not wait to assist the new Government in bringing about the necessary economic and social changes to build a future of security, stability and prosperity for the South African people.

The many positive political changes and international breakthroughs resulting from the end of the cold-war era have had a profound influence on the problem of the Middle East, especially the Palestine issue. The conflict has taken a positive turn in line with those changes. My Government wishes to record its satisfaction over the historic agreement signed between Israel and Jordan, which followed the accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in September 1993. The historic opportunity to achieve lasting peace has now materialized and the international community must guarantee that this important momentum is not lost.

The statistics of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the United Nations give rise to only one conclusion: that we live in a world beset by inequality, gross disparity and imbalance in the distribution of wealth and resources, and urgent solutions for the economic situation of developing countries are required.

The problem of economic imbalance is not limited to a few countries or to one region. It is a global issue - just as peace and democracy are global issues - and for that reason this forum must deal with it as a matter of priority. No longer is it the nuclear nightmare that frightens us most: rather, it is the scourge of poverty, which continues to erode the foundations of our civilization.

In Suriname, as elsewhere in Latin America, the Caribbean and other regions, bold but necessary reforms have been set in motion to eliminate obstacles to development and economic competitiveness in order to adapt to new international realities. In this context, my country is endeavouring to rehabilitate and reconstruct the beleaguered economy of our nation on a sound and solid foundation.

Within the framework of these economic reforms we consider the development of human resources to be a priority issue. We consider it to be extremely important to improve the living conditions and basic health and nutrition of our people. We are committed to these goals because we believe that every human being has the ultimate right to development.

The austerity measures which were subscribed to by my Government have not been easy to implement because of the weakness of the economy and the hardships and suffering they impose on our people. Notwithstanding the progress made so far, it is obvious that such an undertaking calls for the availability of vast resources, which cannot be mobilized at the national level only. We therefore have called on the international community to provide assistance to complement our domestic efforts. In particular, we have called on our historical partner to fulfil the agreements reached in this context and to support us in our attempts to create prosperity for our people.

We must add to this that it is our obligation to see to it that our need for aid does not lead to the recolonization of our country.

My Government shares the international community's concern for the fragile ecosystem in our world, which must be protected. Like other developing countries, Suriname is confronted with the challenge to meet its present development needs and simultaneously safeguard the environment and natural resources for generations to come. In trying to establish a sound balance between development and environment my Government has committed itself to taking all the measures necessary to protect and preserve the environment, in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the Rio de Janeiro Conference, and has incorporated the concept of sustainable development in its national development programmes.

If the international community does not have the political will to deal effectively with the crises occurring

in so many economies, the world will continue to lack stability and will remain vulnerable to upheavals and setbacks that could undermine the foundations of the future.

In the context of the recently held International Conference on Population and Development and the forthcoming Fourth World Conference on Women, a World Summit for Social Development is therefore a timely initiative as it will provide an opportunity to embark on an in-depth analysis of human development in all its aspects. These international meetings should afford all of us the opportunity to address in an integrated manner the issues of poverty, unemployment and social integration.

In Latin America and the Caribbean various encouraging initiatives have been taken to deal effectively with the imperatives of economic and social development and to enhance the capability of the countries of the region to respond to the pressing challenges ahead. Joint efforts aimed at the strengthening of regional integration and cooperation have been made.

On 24 July 1994 in Cartagena, Colombia, we stood at the cradle of the Association of Caribbean States, an association which brings together member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the countries of Central America, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Suriname, Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. This is indeed proof of the growing awareness among the leadership in the region that closer economic and political relations are tools to enhance our capacity to bring prosperity to our peoples. By joining the Association of Caribbean States, Suriname has demonstrated that it is part of the region and wants to participate in the shaping of its future.

Suriname has also explored the possibility of joining CARICOM as a full member since it believes that by joining Suriname will both enhance its own capacity to intensify regional cooperation and bring to the Caribbean Community its cultural richness and its economic opportunities.

Our hemisphere, which includes both developed and developing countries, is being challenged to take the opportunity provided by global changes to develop initiatives for the cultivation of international relations conducive to prosperity for all on the basis of sustainable development, social reform and equity.

In the light of these aims, my country welcomes the proposed Summit for the Americas, to be held in December 1994, at which representatives of countries of the Western hemisphere will come together to address these issues and to act as catalysts for the changes needed in the development patterns of both the countries of the North and those of the South in order for them to reach their common goals.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has on many occasions been described as one of the most important multilateral legal instruments of our century. My Government participated actively in its preparation, and I take great pleasure in congratulating the world community on the coming into force of this Convention on 16 November 1994.

On behalf of my Government, I also wish to express my satisfaction with the agreement that has been reached with regard to the mining of minerals in the deep sea-bed, as contemplated in the aforementioned Convention.

All Members of the United Nations pledge their support for the principles and initiatives of the United Nations. At the same time, the Member States are keeping an eye both on the kind of support and on the level of assistance they can generate from this Organization. Suriname does so.

For Suriname, many aid programmes from the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies have been hampered by the implementation of one of the main criteria for assistance. Suriname was counted among the net contributors of the United Nations Development Programme because our national per capita income was calculated to be higher than $3,000. This figure is wrong because of an unrealistic official exchange rate. Now that the official exchange rate has moved to a realistic level, which is more than 100 times the former rate, Suriname is looking forward to a readjustment of its status and subsequently to a reclassification, and also to the aid programme that will follow this transformation.

We are involved in an evolutionary process, with both the world and the United Nations adjusting to new demands with regard to peace, security and sustainable development. It is clear that a new international order based on the democratic participation of all States calls for a restructuring and strengthening of the United Nations in response to its new responsibilities. Indeed, the role of the United Nations has taken on more

relevance than ever before, and it is most urgent for the international community to restructure this Organization in order to enable it to play the important role for which it was created.

The celebration in 1995 of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will be a good occasion on which to reflect on the new role of the Organization and the attainment of that objective, provided that the relations between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General are reorganized.

My Government is committed to contributing to the successful outcome of this endeavour.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for the statement he has just made.

His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 ***(continued)***

General debate

The President *(interpretation from French):* I now call on His Excellency The Honourable André Ouellet, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Mr. Ouellet (Canada) *(interpretation from French):* Canada is very pleased, Sir, that you have been elected to the presidency of the Assembly, and it is certain that you will, with tact and efficiency, assume the responsibility of guiding our work. You can count on our full cooperation.

The United Nations has always had a special place in Canada's foreign policy. As I address the Assembly for the first time as Minister of Foreign Affairs, I am reminded of something one of my illustrious predecessors, Lester B. Pearson, said about the United Nations:

> "We must cultivate international ideals, develop international policies, strengthen international institutions, above all the United Nations, so that peace and progress can be made secure."

The Government that I represent shares his broad and noble vision of the role and place of the United Nations. In order to face the challenges that await it at the dawn of the twenty-first century, the international community needs, more than ever, a strong, credible multilateral institution equipped with the tools needed to fulfil our expectations.

These challenges are the maintenance of peace and international security, as well as development, justice, democracy, human rights and the fight against inequalities. At a time when we are preparing to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, there is no more urgent task than the intensification of our efforts for reform in order to give our Organization the second wind it needs. Let us draw inspiration from the vision and enthusiasm of the people who drafted the Charter of the United Nations 50 years ago.

The extensive upheavals that have shaken our planet since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold war can be symbolized in a few images. I am thinking of the moving image of President Nelson Mandela taking the oath of office as democratically elected President of South Africa and the historic handshake between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the Palestine Liberation Organization leader, Yasser Arafat. For their people and those in Cambodia, El Salvador - and soon, perhaps, Mozambique and Angola - who have discovered the road to peace, with the help of the United Nations, the future is filled with hope.

There is also hope in Haiti, where a courageous people has been subjected for too long to oppression and abject poverty. We shall share their joy when they can finally welcome to his native land President Aristide, a living symbol of nascent democracy.

But there are also unbearable images of the victims in the market in Sarajevo and the flood of humanity fleeing the killings in Rwanda.

The international community cannot remain indifferent to conflicts that threaten the lives of millions of innocent people and expose them to the worst violations of their most fundamental rights. Recent experience has shown us that only a concerted and determined effort on the part of the international community can solve these problems.

It is no easy task. Faced with the problems in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda or even Haiti, some people will be tempted to give up and wonder if the United Nations is wrong in trying to resolve essentially internal conflicts that have numerous complex causes.

Canada does not share this opinion. We think that, despite these problems, the Security Council is on the right track, even though the steps it has taken have not always proved capable of solving all the problems. Consistent with that belief, we have always made a tangible contribution to United Nations operations, as far as our circumstances permit.

The Canadian contribution to peace-keeping operations in the territories of the former Yugoslavia totals more than 2,000 soldiers and civilian police. The Canadian Government decided a few days ago to renew once more the mandate of its troops for a six-month period. Canada has always been convinced that there can be no military solution to the Yugoslavian conflict. It is because we wish to give peace another chance that we have chosen to maintain our contribution to the United Nations Protection Force.

We have also responded to the Secretary-General's appeal for help in the tragedy of Rwanda. For two months ours was the only country providing an air bridge to Kigali. There are 600 Canadian soldiers serving under the United Nations flag, and many Canadian non-governmental organizations have mobilized to provide help to those in distress.

We will also be in Haiti, with 600 soldiers and 100 police officers when the time comes to deploy the United Nations peace-keeping force. Our participation is a logical sequel to our numerous efforts of the past three years to restore the democratic process in this country, to which we are attached by language, geographical proximity and the many personal ties between our peoples. The Haitian people can count on Canada's lasting help as they rebuild their economy.

We are also contributing to the Middle East peace process. As the leader of the multilateral Working Group on Refugees, we are tackling with determination that task entrusted to us by the international community. Our objective is to contribute to the construction of a renewed region where, 10 years hence, no one will consider himself or herself a refugee. We are also providing substantial financial assistance to the Palestinian people's reconstruction projects. We would favourably consider sending peace-keepers if the need should arise, thus carrying on a lengthy tradition of Canadian participation in peace-keeping operations in the region.

(spoke in English)

The economic and social problems facing the international community often receive less headline attention than the armed conflicts. However, they are every bit as urgent. Hundreds of millions of people around the world continue to be condemned to a life of poverty. For whole sectors of humanity, such basic needs as a proper diet, drinking water, education and medical care are more of a dream than a reality.

Certain parts of the developing world are currently experiencing remarkable progress, while others, unfortunately - the African continent in particular - are continuing to struggle.

It is estimated that there are an unprecedented 19 million refugees and displaced persons in the world. We are witnessing a massive movement of people that none of our societies is able to manage without the cooperation of the entire international community.

The recent Cairo Conference revealed the urgent need for effective measures to cope with the problems of population and development, problems that cannot be resolved without giving full recognition to the essential roles of women.

Our ability to translate into reality the concept of sustainable development will have a very direct impact on the daily lives of our fellow citizens. The fishermen of Newfoundland and the Maritime Provinces of Canada are all too familiar with this problem. Their livelihood has disappeared, through the plundering of fish stocks in international waters off our shores. This is why we believe an agreement must be reached without delay on fishing on the high seas.

We could easily add to the list of pressing problems that I have just mentioned. And no one can challenge the fact that all of these problems - from peace-keeping to development, including the fight against AIDS, drug-trafficking and the protection of human rights and the environment - require a determined, coordinated effort on the part of the international community.

A great deal has been done over the past few years to help our multilateral institutions to effectively face these numerous challenges. However, much more needs to be done. Too often, the intervention of the United Nations comes too late, is too slow and is carried out under inadequate conditions.

The lack of political will on the part of Member States cannot be blamed on the Secretary-General. On the contrary, I would like to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General and his staff. They have done more and better than anyone should expect from an institution deprived of the most elementary resources, lacking even a solid financial foundation.

We must fully assume our responsibilities and give the United Nations the tools required to fulfil its unique mandate successfully. However, it seems that we are unable to take a second look at the habits of the past.

We invest too much energy in activities of marginal use and in unimportant quarrels when there is an emergency right under our noses.

We waste valuable resources by allowing the numerous institutions and agencies we have created over the years to jealously protect their independence and resist change when circumstances require a pooling of energies.

As a result of our extreme reticence to implement administrative reforms, we are handicapping the only institution on which we can depend, when modern and flexible management methods would enable us to respond much more effectively to the needs of the moment.

Canada believes that the reforms of the United Nations system must be deepened and accelerated. We must do more and better with the resources at our disposal.

Efforts should be concentrated on the following five major priorities, which I would like to bring to your attention.

Firstly, we must strengthen the United Nations system's capacity for preventive action. The United Nations already has a number of tools for detecting potential conflicts, and can use a variety of mechanisms to try to eliminate problems before crises break out. Lack of information is not the problem; what we need is the ability to better analyse this information, to develop appropriate strategies and above all to mobilize energy from all components of the system.

In order to act rapidly, the United Nations must be able to count on qualified human resources, available on short notice, to complement its own personnel. This is why Canada has prepared for the Secretary-General an inventory of resource persons suited to missions of good offices or specializing in elections, human rights, the administration of justice and other such fields.

At its first summit in January 1992, the Security Council recognized that non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to international peace and security. Let us recognize once and for all the need to expand the traditional concept of security, and to mobilize all components of the United Nations system to attack conflict at its very roots.

We also feel that the preventive capacity of the United Nations system will be strengthened if we make better use of the expertise of those who have direct knowledge of the field. The United Nations Economic and Social Council should periodically hold public hearings, similar to those held last June on the Agenda for Development, with a view to assisting the United Nations to better anticipate problems and to develop strategies for attacking the economic and social causes of conflicts. The findings of its hearings could and should be provided to the Security Council and the Secretary-General so that they can develop appropriate preventive measures.

Any strategy for preventing armed conflicts also involves pursuing tangible disarmament objectives. Canada has established two priority objectives for the next few years: nuclear non-proliferation and the control of conventional arms.

Nuclear arms control and disarmament are under way: we are continuing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty to ban nuclear testing for all time. Canada is working in the Conference on Disarmament to secure a mandate for negotiations on a convention to prohibit the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. Together, these treaties will have the effect of constraining and preventing a future nuclear arms race.

In 1995 we will have to decide the fate of the world's nuclear non-proliferation regime; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is very important for Canada, and we believe that there is only one option: that the NPT must be indefinitely extended. I urge all Governments to support this option, which will allow for the continuation of a crucial instrument in preventing the spread of nuclear-weapon technology and provide new impetus to reduce existing stocks.

We must also recognize that, although the threat of nuclear weapons is of prime concern, the ongoing use of conventional weapons is an equally dangerous and very real threat to peace and security.

The task of controlling conventional weapons is the responsibility of every Government. Huge sums are being spent each year purchasing such weapons, often to the detriment of services essential to the public, such as education and health care. Those who are more concerned about the size of their military arsenal than about the welfare of their people should no longer expect to receive unconditional international aid.

The recently established United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a start, and I urge Member States to make information available to the Register as Canada has done.

More can be done, however. For example, next year we will be reviewing the Convention on certain conventional weapons that deals with land-mines. The abuse of land-mines is responsible for continued suffering and death of civilians long after the fighting has stopped. I welcome the proposal made by President Clinton on Monday to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of anti-personnel land mines. He can count on the support and assistance of the Government of Canada on this useful idea. We must strengthen the Convention by extending its scope to cover internal as well as international conflicts and by insisting on effective verification measures to ensure compliance. We will create a task force in Canada to consider other initiatives that might be taken in the coming months, and I look forward to sharing ideas on this subject with other ministers.

Secondly, we must conduct an in-depth review of the United Nations economic and social activities. I think I speak for most members of the Assembly when I express serious concerns regarding what can best be described as the drift of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors. While the debate on the United Nations mandate in the areas of peace and security is lively and productive, it is unfortunately too often vague and directionless when we tackle economic and social problems.

We are not saying that everything must be changed - far from it. But certain reforms have already been introduced; to mention but one, we welcome the decision to make the United Nations Development Programme Administrator responsible for system-wide coordination. But at a time when large sectors of international economic activities are beyond the control of States, and when the resources devoted to development and international cooperation are subject to all manner of constraint in all of our countries, we must rethink the role and mandate of all our multilateral institutions, including those of Bretton Woods. These questions will be taken up at next year's Group of Seven summit, to be held in Halifax, and should be debated as widely as possible within other relevant institutions.

Canada is ready to proceed with a comprehensive re-evaluation of its multilateral system as it applies to economic and social issues. If necessary, the relevance of certain institutions must be rethought, and a real solution must be found to the problem of duplication.

We expect great things of the next chapter of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development. We share to a great extent his visions of development, which encompass all facets of human activity, and particularly its social dimensions. Although the full importance of these dimensions has finally been grasped, they are still poorly integrated in our development strategies. The time has come to translate this vision into new operational priorities and to adapt our institutions and structures to it. The Secretary-General should not hesitate to recommend radical reform if necessary. Together we can restore the relevance and leadership of the United Nations system. We must adapt it to the new realities of an ever-changing world.

Thirdly, we must strengthen the rapid-intervention capability of the United Nations. The implementation of a number of the proposals advanced by the Secretary-General in "An Agenda for Peace" has enabled the United Nations to make great strides in the area of peace-keeping. Last April the Government of Canada took the initiative of inviting the major troop-contributing countries to a meeting in Ottawa to discuss problems associated with political direction, command and control and the training of peace-keeping- operations personnel.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce that Canada will soon open a centre for peace-keeping research and training. The centre, to be located on the site of the former military base in Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, will be named after Lester B. Pearson, Canadian recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. I invite Member States to come and join us so they can share our experience and help fine-tune our future approach.

The experience of the last few years leads us to believe that we need to explore even more innovative options than those considered to date. Recent peace-keeping missions have demonstrated the limitations of the traditional approach. As we now fully realize, rapid deployment of intervention forces is essential.

In the light of the prevailing situation, the Government of Canada has decided to conduct an in-depth review of the short-, medium- and long-term options available to us to strengthen the rapid-response capability of the United Nations in times of crisis. From among these options, we feel that the time has come to study the possibility, over the long term, of creating a permanent United Nations military force. We will ask the world's leading experts for their input and will inform all Member States of the results of the study.

(spoke in French)

Fourthly, we must improve the functioning of United Nations decision-making bodies.

The Security Council currently bears enormous responsibilities. Its decisions are binding on all Member States and have a determining influence on millions of people. It is essential that the Council be able to reflect as accurately as possible the wishes of the entire international community. For this reason, it is imperative that the composition of the Council be reviewed. By making the Council more representative of today's world, we can enhance the legitimacy of its actions and facilitate their implementation. Canada will continue to play an active role in the negotiations launched during the last session of the General Assembly, with a view to concluding an agreement as soon as possible.

However, an expanded Council must not be seen as a panacea. As we have said on a number of occasions, the Council must make its working methods more transparent and become more receptive to the viewpoints of non-member States with special concerns. More specifically, Canada has advocated closer dialogue between the Council and troop-contributing countries. The informal practices developed in recent years are a good start, but in our view we must look for practical ways to institutionalize them. We ask the members of the Council to keep an open mind in this regard.

Finally, we must put the United Nations on a sound financial footing.

It goes without saying that the United Nations can fulfil the mandates we give it only to the extent that Member States meet their financial obligations and contribute generously to its voluntary funds. The sums in question are no doubt modest when compared with those invested elsewhere, but they represent none the less a burden that is already significant and growing larger at a time when many of our countries, Canada most definitely included, are going through a difficult period of budgetary adjustment.

Our taxpayers do not question the need to contribute to the United Nations, but they are entitled to expect that their contributions will be spent judiciously. That is why we attach such great importance to the need for sound management of the system's resources. The recent creation of the new position of inspector general should help tighten controls and improve administrative practices. There is also a need to review budgetary procedures in order to make them more transparent and to simplify those that govern peace-keeping operations.

Reviewing the scale of assessments is always a perilous undertaking, but I believe the need to do so has become urgent. The current system suffers from serious distortions and no longer reflects properly Member States' ability to pay. We hope the General Assembly will make this a priority issue at the current session.

In the final analysis, the future of the United Nations depends on the willingness of its Member States to lend it political and practical support. This support depends in turn on the degree of support the Organization receives from our respective citizenries. It is not only Member States' credibility that is at stake, but, even more important, that of the United Nations.

Governments must strive to work together and in cooperation with private enterprise and non-governmental organizations to define our new vision of the United Nations for the next century. This is, in part, why the Canadian Government has provided support to the Canadian Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations. That Committee, which brings together leaders from all sectors, has prepared a remarkable programme of activities to commemorate the anniversary everywhere in our country. The emphasis is being placed on youth education and the main subjects of the United Nations agenda.

Next year at this time, all eyes will be turned towards the General Assembly. Let us make that

anniversary the beginning of a new era for the United Nations.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres. I now call on him.

Mr. Peres (Israel): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are pleased that the representative of Côte d'Ivoire - a nation for which Israel has high regard - has been elected to this distinguished post. I should like to express to the Secretary General our deepest appreciation for his contribution to world peace in general, and to peace in the Middle East in particular.

A year ago, I offered a concept for a new Middle East. Many applauded; more remained sceptical. What at that time seemed lofty is today a reality. I feel I can submit today an invitation to a further journey in the new Middle East.

Last year was a year of remarkable events. The Palestinian people, as a result of our agreement, gained authority in Gaza and Jericho; Jordan and Israel agreed, in the Washington Declaration, to end the state of war and move towards an agreement of full peace; voices of promise are exchanged between Damascus and Jerusalem; multilateral meetings produced a network of regional cooperation; Morocco and Israel established formal relations; and an agenda for a new Middle East will emerge from an unprecedented economic conference in Casablanca next month.

The desire for peace is rooted in the millenniums of Jewish existence. Generations prayed for it, and now a young generation in Israel is today engaged in making it. The search for peace is shared by young people all over the Middle East, Arabs and Israelis alike. We have to fulfil their hope.

I am addressing this Assembly for the first time, not as a party to a controversy, but as a representative of a country that has shown a capacity to solve conflicts that seemed insoluble.

The United Nations should play an increasing role facing the changing times. It can define new destinies. It can adopt new means.

As the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, it may adopt models for new endeavours by mobilizing builders to construct peace, not just by deploying troops to keep it. Economic structures will offer more than military deployment.

Gaza, as an example, has a new authority. It needs a new economy. The United Nations can provide an answer. The 7,000 years of Gaza are mainly a history of suffering. Its population density today is among the highest in the world.

There is a role for the United Nations in Gaza, and it has played one. It began by stationing troops - which were recalled, unfortunately, on the eve of the Six-Day War. Then UNRWA came and supplied food, health and education to the refugees. Then UNDP contributed greatly to the construction of an infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

The United Nations can help Gaza today become free from want. It can introduce there the necessary economic and proper social institutions. An enlarged allocation for Gaza, with the existing United Nations administration, will produce immediate results and may make Gaza a new model of United Nations endeavours.

The world is moving from military might to social priorities. It is time to turn from political confrontation to economic cooperation. In the Middle East, economic growth can compensate for political compromises.

We no longer live in a closed world. The intensive flow of information has opened the eyes of many people. No longer can tyranny blind their perceptions. Iron curtains can no longer bar the spread of the true story. Knowledge has finally overcome propaganda.

This current is profound and lasting. The sources of strength and wealth are today universal rather than national, intellectual rather than material. The size of the territory, the number of its people, the wealth of its raw materials, no longer decide the fate of a nation. It is the scope of education, the level of science, applied technology and up-to-date information that make all the difference.

Intellectual sources are no longer partitioned by traditional divides. Science has no territorial limits. Technology has no national flags. Information can travel without visas. Armies cannot conquer wisdom. Borders cannot protect knowledge. The talent of creation is replacing the strategies of destruction. Computers, not

rifles, mark the difference. The hunting season in history is disappearing.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This does not mean an end to agonies. Starvation, disease, terrorism, desertification, nuclear weapons, ecological damage and dangerous drugs overflow the boundaries of land and the boundaries of reason.

Violence employs new tactics: it has not disappeared. Confrontations in the future may not necessarily be wars of conquest, but bloodshed of protest. The strong know that they will not be strengthened by dominating the poor, or by owning their deserts. The poor cannot, and will not, comply with their conditions, tolerated by the indifference of the well-off.

Existing institutions were initiated in a different time. They are based today on memories rather than on needs. Ministries of foreign affairs and defence were structured to confront enemies. Now we face dangers more than enemies, but without our being organized to handle them. We are not answering the need. Diplomacy and strategy should be mobilized to face the undefined dangers. Disease will not be overcome by traditional diplomatic *démarches*. Starvation cannot be eliminated by guns. Deserts will not bloom beneath air raids. Remedies will not arrive of their own accord: they should be invented and introduced.

Israel is on the side of this tendency. We are committed to ending the conflicts. We are determined to uproot their causes. We do not intend to stop this momentum or allow its interruption.

For the last five decades the mere existence of Israel has served as a temptation to try and destroy it. For half a century we had to give security top priority. To this very day, we shed tears on the tombs of our children, who paid with their young lives to overcome the menace. When wars became futile, suspicion succeeded fighting. The allegation was that Israel was trying to expand territorially and was unwilling to compromise geographically. Reality ended this allegation as well.

Egypt, first to negotiate peace, found an Israel willing to exchange land for peace. The Palestinians, next in line, gained jurisdiction over territories they had never controlled before. With Jordan, we agreed to delineate a permanent border without one side encroaching on the land of the other. Syria was told at the outset of negotiations that the nature of peace would affect the depth of the withdrawal. Lebanon was told that Israel had no demands on its territory and no intention of compromising its integrity.

Negotiations have not been easy. With the Palestinians, we negotiated on uncharted ground. Never had the Palestinian people experienced self-rule. Today they possess a territorial address and an administrative authority. For the first time in their history, their children's education is solely in Palestinian hands. In the coming days Israel will hand over additional responsibilities to the Palestinian Authority. The Declaration of Principles will be fully implemented in the spirit and letter. We shall support a Palestinian readiness to hold democratic elections.

Israel, as well as the Palestinians, may discover that Palestinian democracy and Israeli security are complementary. We have demonstrated that we are true in our moral choice not to govern the destiny of another people.

We shall continue to negotiate with Syria. We are negotiating out of conviction, not weakness, and we hope to conclude the negotiations with a settlement that will respect the interests of both sides, without harming Syrian dignity or compromising Israeli security. Syria insists on a narrow path for the negotiations, postponing meetings between the leaders and thus slowing the pace of negotiations. Israel is ready for accelerated negotiations. We address the Syrians by saying: "Let us talk face to face. Let us negotiate, as proclaimed in Damascus, with courage to attain a peace of honour. By ending suspicion, introducing creativity and allowing flexibility, we can transform a promising climate into a solid terrain." Syria declared its strategy for peace. We appreciate it.

Military threats and territorial positions should be transformed by security arrangements, diplomatic rapport, full peace and economic endeavours. That will erode the motivation for conflict. Without peaceful relations, balances of power are meaningless. The range of understanding can serve as the only answer to the range of ballistic missiles.

President Clinton and Secretary of State Christopher are relentlessly pushing for peace. European, Russian and many other leaders are genuinely supportive. Important Middle Eastern leaders are actively engaged in

the same direction. Still, much depends on direct negotiations. Yesterday's enemies, tomorrow's partners, should become today's interlocutors.

A peace treaty between Israel and Syria may produce a historic result greater than just an agreement between two countries. It may well become the crowning of a comprehensive peace. It may become an opportunity for the leaders of the region - Kings, Presidents, Prime Ministers, supported by the most prominent leaders of our time - to gather and announce the end of the conflict and to proclaim full peace throughout the region.

Peace can hardly emerge from stinginess. By definition, it calls for generosity. Peace is more than a mere ceremony. It requires ongoing maintenance; it awaits a passionate cultivation of new relations. We hope that our neighbours, from Saudi Arabia to Lebanon, from Djibouti to Algeria, will become constructive partners in it. Dark clouds are still hanging over the horizon - the shadows of missed opportunities.

We have to build a coalition to prevent subversive turbulence from undermining legitimate Governments and harassing the stability needed for the inflow of investment. All countries of the Middle East face a choice: to remain politically divided and economically stagnant or to become economically advanced and politically just.

A high standard of living for the people - all people - is the best promise for stability in our midst. Israel is willing to participate in achieving it. There are sceptics, we know, who do not believe that the Middle East is ripe for a common market similar to the European one. They forget that Europe did not do it in one leap. It started with a Community of coal and steel. We can start with a community of water and tourism.

Nor do they believe that the Middle East is ready for a free trade zone like the one in North America. Yet the North American Free Trade Agreement emerged in a short while as a success by linking geographic proximity with economic growth. Those sceptics claim that generations are needed to cement a new market in the Middle East. Well, they can see what in 10 short years happened to Asian countries, which attained unpredicted prosperity. They achieved it by adopting a market economy.

The profile of a market economy is clear. It is made of comprehensive education, open borders, free movement, science-based industries and competitive trade. A market economy is a fabric woven from political silk and durable threads of welfare. The time is ripe for its rendezvous with the Middle East.

At the end of October, under the presidency of King Hassan II, we shall take the first step to implement a regional design. We shall try to establish instruments for development: a regional bank, channels for private investment and a framework for regional planning. The wealth of the Middle East should be convinced to remain at home. Over the last decade it has invested the better part of its fortunes abroad. Homebound wealth will attract foreign investment as well.

We should cut the enormous expense - $70 billion annually - of the arms race. The savings can be directed to development. The arms race can be reduced only by regional consent. No single country will do it alone.

To transform the region and make it a stable and attractive place we need the emergence of the region as a whole, committed to a new future. Nature, and not only politics, calls for it. The waters, the winds, the environment call for regional responsibility and cooperation, for desalinization plants, energy stations, highways, railways, runways, piers, telecommunication networks, high-tech industries, tourism infrastructure, banking systems, computer terminals and ecological considerations - a landscape that will meet the future will create a state of prosperity, and it is a regional challenge.

The Middle East was the cradle of civilization and has a capacity to contribute. It experienced golden ages, economically and culturally. It should be our collective ambition to make it happen again and to make it happen soon. Today, shortages can be bridged rapidly. Computers can carry children not only from grade to grade but from age to age. The software of knowledge will better replace the hardware of weapons.

I have served my country since its birth. I have learned that complex problems call for unconventional solutions. I feel that over the past year we have won a licence to build a new Middle East, to make it part of the globe in its new age, free of wars, free of enemies, free of terrorism; a Middle East which will be nuclear-free, missile-free, hunger-free, discrimination-free, tyranny-free; a constituency of peace, a domain of freedom, a land of prosperity. There is a morning awaiting us after a long night, calling us to direct our energies and our aims and our prayers towards that great opportunity.

The President returned to the Chair.

Address by Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mr. Abdellatif Filali, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, His Excellency Mr. Abdellatif Filali, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Filali (Morocco) *(interpretation from Arabic):* I am pleased to extend to you, Sir, my sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly and to express to you my great delight at seeing you, a distinguished friend from a sisterly country, conducting the work of this session.

Your competence and great diplomatic experience are assets which ensure the success of our deliberations. We are convinced that, through you, Africa will bring to this session its well-known capabilities and talents in order to secure the best results for our work. Allow me to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco.

I should also like to pay tribute to His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana and President of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, for the laudable work he accomplished.

I should like also to express to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, my sincere regards and appreciation for his untiring efforts in upholding the principles of the Charter and for the wisdom and the perspicacity with which he faces the increasing responsibilities assigned to the United Nations in recent years.

The end of the cold war gave the peoples of the world cause for hope that they were about to see the dawn of a new era in international relations, an era of democracy, justice and an effective international solidarity which would take into account the interests of all.

Years after that historic opportunity, we have come to realize that our optimism was unjustified. We are to see yet any sincere international effort towards the creation of a new world order and of the hoped-for peace dividends we have seen nothing concrete yet. On the contrary, what we see now makes us fear that that historic opportunity is on the verge of being dissipated in the fog of an ambiguous international political atmosphere.

A close examination of the characteristics of the present world order reveals that its thrust focuses almost totally on the issues of economic openness, freedom of international trade, democracy and human rights.

There is no doubt that these two last questions deserve every attention, since they are among the underpinnings of any system of honest government and of social justice and have always been among the goals of enlightened civilizations in their search for a fair society in which justice and social peace may prevail.

Maybe it would be going too far to insist, as some do, on the adoption of one model of democracy, out of all the other models, by all the countries and societies of the world without taking into account the numerous factors which have to do with the civilizations of the peoples of those countries, their customs, traditions, cultures, the degree of their development, their general conception of the universe we live in, or their views concerning life and society.

As regards our Organization, the principles of democracy require us to examine its methods of operation in order to secure a unified implementation of its resolutions and ensure efficiency in the discharge of its duties.

In view of the ever-increasing importance of the role the Security Council now plays in international affairs, we must debate the extent of its adaptation to the great changes that have taken place in the world recently and which have affected the balance of power, side by side with the new political and economic trends, so that we may find consensus solutions in reviewing the Security Council's methods of work and in trying to enhance its efficacy.

The changes I have spoken of require us to review also some of the provisions of the Charter with a view to enabling our Organization to face up to the new international challenges with the participation of all in the interests of all.

As for the question of human rights, the Kingdom of Morocco attaches great importance to those rights, which are enshrined in our constitution. However, I wish to point out - as I did in past years - that human rights have different aspects which must be respected fully. We should not focus solely on the political aspect whose importance has been established. The rights of the human being to the essential, basic human needs such as food, clothing, medicine and shelter are inalienable and fundamental, just exactly as the right to life. That is why the World Conference on Human Rights, which was convened in Vienna last year, determined that economic development which makes it possible to satisfy those needs was a fundamental human right.

Consequently, the affluent nations have an obligation to pay more attention to the economic interests of the developing world in order to help it reach the levels of development that will allow it to accord to those rights the priority they deserve.

In this context, we expect the World Summit for Social Development, which will take place in Copenhagen next year, to define the essential needs of man the satisfaction of which would guarantee a decent life and expect the Summit to set up a plan of action to stimulate social development and economic progress in the countries of the third world.

The world has entered upon a new era marked by fundamental changes in the traditional international relations which emphasized the primacy of political beliefs. In addition, the great Powers have engaged in a new race for economic interests in place of the arms race. The race that now concerns them is characterized by the strengthening of relations within great economic groupings with a view to the creation of new economic blocs. These developments will undoubtedly alter the economic and political map of the world and will, thereby, widen the gap between the developed and the developing countries.

In a much more interdependent world, thanks to the new means of communication and technology, such as live television broadcasts, it has become ever more difficult to persuade the peoples of the developing countries to be content with their lot while the disparities between the affluence of the developed countries and the misery of the developing countries are constantly worsening. Therefore, it would be illogical to expect that lasting peace and security could prevail in a world wherein the overwhelming majority of people live in despair, deprivation and social misery.

The rich countries should find satisfactory solutions to the economic problems of developing countries - in particular, to those related to the deterioration in terms of trade, the decline in commodity prices, external indebtedness and technological weaknesses.

In April 1994, the city of Marrakech hosted the signing of various agreements under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Through these agreements, the international community established the primacy of the rule of law in international economic and trade relations and put an end to the law of the primacy of strength that prevailed in the past.

The agreements, which were signed by 109 States, included a number of extremely positive elements. One of the most significant results of the Marrakech agreements was the creation of the World Trade Organization, which will come into being next year and will have competence in the areas of control and implementation. We hope that this new organization, thanks to its competences, the policies laid for it, and the programme of work designed to pursue those policies will be able to lay real foundations for international trade that would free trade from the protectionism that plagues it under many guises such as the so-called social considerations that relate to workers' rights and environmental considerations.

In the aftermath of the Second World War and the setting up of the United Nations, international relations have been characterized essentially by the movement towards the liberation of peoples from the colonial yoke, especially in Africa and Asia. Nowadays, only some enclaves remain from the colonial era. For particular reasons, those enclaves required more time for their liberation, and they are now involved in settlement processes with the agreement of the interested parties.

The British colony of Hong Kong will revert to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, as will the Portuguese colony of Macau in the near future. Similarly, the status of Gibraltar is the subject of continuous discussions between Spain and the United Kingdom with a view to the return of that Territory to Spanish sovereignty.

These are settlement processes that we in Morocco strongly support.

As we know, some enclaves in the northern part of Morocco are still under Spanish control. These are the cities of Sebta and Melilia and the neighbouring islands. Since its accession to independence, my country has tirelessly asked Spain to return those enclaves so that we may restore our territorial integrity and put an end to this long-standing dispute.

There is no doubt the ideal solution in this respect would be to follow the same procedure that was adopted in the case of each of the territories I have just mentioned, namely, dialogue, natural understanding and harking to the voice of wisdom by heeding the logic of our time and taking into account the interests of both parties.

We believe that the Moroccan-Spanish group proposed by His Majesty King Hassan II to reflect and consult on that question is the best framework within which it would be possible to reach a settlement that may safeguard the sovereign rights of Morocco and, at the same time, allows Spain to protect its economic interests.

We are convinced that the historic ties of civilization between Morocco and Spain as well as our relations of good-neighbourliness and our fruitful cooperation in several areas will make it possible to overcome the difficulties that lie in the way of the settlement of this dispute.

The freeing of relations between Morocco and Spain from the remnants of the past is a matter of significant importance in view of the fact that both countries belong to the Mediterranean region, that sensitive part of the world which should be a region of cooperation, stability and solidarity.

In this context, we are convinced that the prosperity and security of Europe and particularly of its Mediterranean countries could not be fully achieved without genuine efforts to contribute to the development of the southern Mediterranean countries. We are also convinced that this will be achieved only through the eradication of the existing gap between the countries of the two sides of the Mediterranean and the establishment of a multifaceted cooperation that would be inspired by a comprehensive vision of the concept of cooperation and anchored in the will of both sides to enter into a partnership that may provide a solid foundation for the prosperity and stability of the region.

Proceeding from this conviction, the Kingdom of Morocco proposed to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at its fourth session held in December 1993 in Rome, the convening of a ministerial meeting to address the issues of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region in which all the Mediterranean countries as well as all other countries interested in the future of that sensitive region would participate in order to consult over the various issues and problems that face the region. We do hope that the proposal will gain the support of the countries concerned.

Along with our brethren from the countries of the Arab Maghreb, Morocco has made sustained efforts aimed at securing the unity of the region and ensuring the coming to being of the institutions of such unity.

However, it is no secret to anyone that the achievement of the desired unity still faces certain difficulties regardless of all that has been accomplished so far at the institutional, structural and regulatory levels. Nevertheless, it is the conviction of all concerned that the setting up of that edifice will benefit all the people of the region and will open up great vistas in the areas of development and progress.

It is obvious that the pace of progress towards the achievement of the desired objectives is rather slow at the time. However, my country remains prompted by a sincere determination and by a firm will to overcome those difficulties, in the conviction that its future and that of the countries of the region depend to a great extent on the achievement of such unity and solidarity amongst them. In all this, there is the awareness that the ties of common heritage, of common history, of culture, of language and of religion bind all our peoples together.

With regard to the so-called question of Western Sahara, the United Nations settlement plan has entered the final stage of implementation. The Kingdom of Morocco has cooperated sincerely with the Secretary-General, as attested to in the Secretary-General's reports, with a view to facilitating his mission and speeding up the ongoing process. Therefore, we look forward with optimism to the holding of the referendum within the next few months.

The past decade was one of the most disastrous for the African continent in economic and in social terms. The limited international effort provided to assist the continent has not yielded any improvement so far. As a matter of fact, standards of living in many sub-Saharan

countries continue to worsen as the per capita income continues to decline while the growth rate of the gross national product dropped to less than 1.5 per cent at a time when the population grows at a much greater rate.

Thus the overall economic situation in Africa has fallen to a level below the one recorded in the seventies. Because of such constant deterioration and the marginalization from which Africa suffers, partial and temporary solutions cannot satisfy us. Exceptional international efforts should be undertaken and drastic solutions designed to remedy to the situation.

On the occasion of the holding of the historic meeting of Marrakech, in the context of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Agreements, His Majesty the King has called upon the leaders of the world to integrate the economy of Africa in the global economy and urged the elaboration of a Marshall Plan with a view to reducing poverty and alleviating the suffering of millions of human beings in our continent.

As an African country, the Kingdom of Morocco continues to do its utmost in assisting sisterly countries in the sub-Saharan region by all the means at its disposal. In fact, my country channels 90 per cent of the funds it allocates to international cooperation to the assistance of sisterly African countries.

During the month of April 1994, the African scene witnessed an important event, namely, the victory of democratic forces, the forces of peace and freedom, against the forces of racial discrimination. Thus, South Africa's first free elections in which all segments of its people participated have resulted in the election of Mr. Nelson Mandela to the presidency of the Republic.

The Kingdom of Morocco had earlier expressed its satisfaction at those decisive developments, which ended a half-century-long conflict and allowed South Africa, a sister country, to usher in a new era of national harmony and democracy and give it reason to look forward to a prosperous future for all its people. My country made its contribution by giving an impetus to the reconciliation process through meeting with and offering encouragement to Presidents Mandela and De Klerk, both known for their wisdom and clearsightedness.

We were one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the new South Africa - more than two years ago now - and we will make every effort to strengthen the basis of our cooperation with that country, which, to our great satisfaction, has taken back its rightful place within the United Nations. We have no doubt that South Africa will greatly and positively contribute to the enrichment and effectiveness of the work of our Organization and to the well-being of the entire African continent.

One year after the signing in Washington of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Gaza and Jericho, between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, we note today that the peace process in the Middle East is moving along at a steady pace, thus giving rise to some optimism for the first time in the last 50 years.

In spite of the hindrances and obstacles it faces from time to time, this agreement is being effectively and practically implemented. We hope that this encouraging start will continue and will include all the occupied Palestinian territory, and that it will result in the transfer of all powers to the Palestinian National Authority to pave the way for a comprehensive solution that would grant the totality of its legitimate rights to the Palestinian people, including the creation of an independent State with Al-Quds as its capital, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.

It was only natural that the Palestinian self-government experience should face initial difficulties and experience sensitive beginnings. We hope that the States members of the international community that have followed this issue for decades and that supported the struggle of the Palestinian people throughout its different stages will not fail to grant all the necessary material aid and assistance to the Palestinian National Authority during this delicate period, in order to help it build its national institutions and its economic structures, and to ensure the success of this experience.

Similarly, Jordan and Israel have signed an agreement recently in Washington. However, the advent of peace and security in that region will always depend on the achievement of a comprehensive solution, which would guarantee the recovery of Syrian and Lebanese territories, in conformity with international legality and in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

The Kingdom of Morocco, convinced of the virtues of dialogue and concerted action among the parties to the Arab Israeli conflict, was one of the first to recommend and promote this approach as the ideal means for the

settlement of disputes. My country strongly believes that the logic of war and violence does not lead to permanent solutions. That is why we feel a great deal of satisfaction today as we see the parties in the Middle East engaging in a constructive dialogue to achieve an agreement that would put paid to conflicts and tragedies and usher in a new era of peace, cooperation and well-being in the region's history.

In order to encourage peace efforts and to make the Arab world benefit from their dividends, Morocco will host next month, in Casablanca, an Economic Conference for the Middle East and North Africa. Highly placed government officials, and businessmen as well as financial and economic experts will participate in the Conference. This gathering will aim at setting the rules for boosting the economy and development in the two regions, and at creating economic programmes based on partnership for the benefit of the countries of the two regions and their peoples.

Regarding the dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates, we hope that the two countries, which are members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, will resort to dialogue to resolve their dispute over the future of the islands of Abu Moussa and the Greater and the Lesser Tumbs. The historic and friendly relations between the two peoples, which allowed them to coexist under United Arab Emirates sovereignty on Abu Moussa island, should enable them to return to normal relations.

Contemporary history has known few tragedies comparable to the one being experienced by the people of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who have been, and still are, subjected to all kinds of collective punishments, massacres, "ethnic cleansing", displacement, confiscation of property, destruction of places of worship and demolition of cultural monuments. The inability of the international community and of the United Nations in particular to put an end to these outrageous criminal acts and their inability to uphold the principles of international law, which is violated daily by Serbian practices, is intolerable and unacceptable.

Our Organization will celebrate next year its fiftieth anniversary. The period that has elapsed since its inception has known many activities and accomplishments but also some failures and setbacks. As regards its accomplishments, one should underline its sustained action to liberate peoples from the colonial yoke and to assist them in obtaining their political independence, as well as its activities aiming at the settlement of many conflicts by peaceful means and the maintenance of international peace and security through, *inter alia*, peace-keeping operations. Its specialized institutions and agencies have also made considerable contributions through their great efforts in social, health and cultural matters.

However, our Organization has been unable to accomplish some tasks entrusted to it by the Charter. I refer in particular to economic and development issues. No large-scale action has been taken to help developing countries in particular achieve economic development, despite the efforts and the many meetings devoted to this question.

This fiftieth anniversary will take place in an international environment that is totally different from the one that followed the Second World War. Our Organization must adapt to this change by exploring the prospects of the twenty-first century, of which we are on the threshold.

To this end, several ideas have been put forward with the aim of strengthening our Organization, reforming its structures and affording it the means whereby it could meet the new and increasing demands made upon it in many areas. In short, the aim is to enable the Organization to satisfy the current needs of the international community. The Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace" appeared at the right moment to show us the appropriate means by which the organs of the United Nations might serve international peace and security. The report also introduced new ideas concerning preventive diplomacy with the aim of preventing the eruption of new conflicts and dealt with the issues of building and maintaining peace, as well as many other issues, and put forth proposals which we are sure will improve the functioning of our Organization.

There is no doubt that the fiftieth anniversary celebrations will be an opportunity for many world leaders and other high officials that are rich in experience to rethink the future of our Organization in order to enable it to meet the highest aspirations of mankind in the twenty-first century: to live in peace and security, in social justice and human dignity.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call upon the Minister for Foreign Relations of Panama, His Excellency Mr. Gabriel Lewis Galindo.

Mr. Lewis Galindo (Panama) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: First of all allow me to say how pleased we are at your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Since you are such an eminent statesman, we are certain that this session will be a resounding success. We hail the work accomplished by Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana, who presided over the recently concluded session of the General Assembly. We are grateful to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the Organization, for the fine job he is doing, reflecting his constant concern with helping to build a more just and progressive world society on the basis of the purposes and principles of the San Francisco Charter.

This past May, the Panamanian people completed an irreproachable electoral process. The results now make it possible for us to undertake the democratic reconstruction of the State, with broad-based and cooperative participation by all of Panama's various social groupings.

This has made it possible for us to develop promising new relations of understanding and cooperation with the Government of the United States, grounded in a common resolve to fulfil on schedule the timetable established by the Torrijos-Carter Treaties on the Panama Canal and associated territories. Furthermore, we are seeking to extend our relations, as partners and friends of the United States, into fields that will facilitate the solution of regional and world problems affecting the stability of areas of common interest to both nations. With maturity, and an intense sense of dignity and patriotism, the Government of Panama is embarking on a new era in our relations with the United States.

Thus these Treaties today are becoming once more for our two nations what we intended them to be when they were signed 17 years ago: the feasibility of a great Power and a small country working together, peacefully, to achieve mutually beneficial results on matters that previously gave rise to confrontation. Furthermore, this is in keeping with the principles of international law and gives us all new cause for hope concerning the new era the world is now seeking to establish.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Pursuant to those Treaties, the Government headed by Mr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares intends in a responsible manner to put into effect the timetable of reversion to Panama of all the lands, waters and installations that form the Canal and its contiguous area. Similarly, we intend to ensure full demilitarization of the waterway and, consequently, we are planning as of now the prompt conversion of the foreign military installations there into industrial and trading posts of international interest, whose operations will be carried out just a few scant yards from the vessels that pass through day by day, heading towards all points of the compass.

The decisions we have taken will ensure that this strip of territory will become one of the most attractive areas for investment in the Atlantic, the Americas, and the Pacific Basin.

Despite Panama's intense economic and cultural energy, it is a small country. Hence developing this project will require international cooperation. In the short term, the new Panamanian Government intends to coordinate this cooperation in order to take the best possible advantage of a tremendous potential.

In this context, we shall convene in 1997 the World Congress on the Panama Canal to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. This event will bring together the users of the Canal and the potential users of the associated facilities - shipbuilders, industrialists, financiers, technical experts, planners and leaders of higher education - to consider the scope and orchestration of the entire development project for the Panama Canal and the Panamanian nation.

This Congress will also be an arena for the display of technology-, media- and communications-related products, as well as for interoceanic and intercontinental trade. It will therefore be of particular importance in gauging the scope of the new world trend which we now call "globalization". For this reason, we intend to plan this Congress with the cooperation of the United Nations as well as that of the two countries which, in their time, were engaged in the construction of the Canal - France and the United States.

There is another facet to this situation, however. We Panamanians have convincingly proved our ability to efficiently administer and operate the existing Canal; we shall demonstrate this once again at the World Congress. Yet we wish to make further use of these skills, and this desire forms the basis for the projects tied in with the current, final phase of implementation of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties: by this, I mean the international university conglomerate that we call the "*Ciudad del*

Saber", "the City of Knowledge". In this area, and with the excellent infrastructure facilities that will soon revert to Panama, we can bring together, in the best possible physical environment, faculties and departments of the major universities interested in studying subjects related to the next century and its prospects - subjects such as communications and telecommunications, naval and air transport, computer technology, international trade, the environment and sustainable development, as well as economic and business relations between our Americas and the Pacific basin.

Thus conceived, the City of Knowledge will replace military bases and foreign soldiers with an international conglomerate of universities and a great army of students and teachers from all corners of the world. This will be the best possible way to celebrate the end of the cold war and the development of new world circumstances, while at the same time making the new era accessible to many thousands of our young people. We are certain that this project will receive the necessary international cooperation and the support of the United Nations system.

There is another issue of similar, worldwide interest that deserves the attention of this forum. Although it is an interoceanic passageway, the Panama Canal is fed exclusively by fresh water. For this reason, its existence, the quality of its services and the possibility of expanding them depend on the renewal of its forests and the attention to the environment that is indispensable to feeding its basin, guaranteeing the water supply and making it possible for the Canal to operate.

This basin has suffered disturbing deterioration, which, should it continue, could jeopardize the services provided to the world by the Canal. Conscious of its responsibilities, our country has begun a series of national and international consultations with a view to devising a campaign that would secure the technical and financial resources needed to ensure the environmental conditions required for the improvement and optimal use of the Canal. This campaign could perhaps serve as a symbol of international cooperation in ensuring appropriate use of resources necessary to mankind.

Our country has recently rejoined the Rio Group - of which we were one of the initial promoters - as a full member. With respect to foreign policy, we fully concur with the purposes, declarations and agreements adopted by this group.

We Panamanians are sincerely resolved to expand our political dialogue and economic cooperation with neighbouring countries. To this end, we are pursuing the process of integration with the countries of Central America in all ways that can be mutually beneficial.

Because of its history and traditions, as well as for reasons of geographical proximity and economic affinity, Panama will be promoting links and integration with its South American neighbours, with which it shares the ideals of Bolivar.

At the same time, the great trading opportunities afforded us as a result of the reversion of the Panama Canal and its adjacent areas make it incumbent on us to strengthen our links with the countries of the Pacific basin, and to work together on projects and activities of mutual benefit.

For similar reasons, Panama, which already has a special relationship with the United States - a relationship that is taking on special significance today - intends to seek membership in the North American Free Trade Association, whose current members, Canada, the United States and Mexico, are certain to play a significant role in ensuring the best possible use of the Canal areas that will revert to Panama.

In recent times, the international community has noted symptoms of repeated crises in certain parts of the Caribbean area. Indeed, on certain specific conditions, Panama has offered parts of its national territory to help provide a temporary solution to the problem of the Haitian and Cuban raft and boat people. This gesture has been motivated solely by humanitarian considerations, without political or diplomatic implications. We shall continue to act in this manner, especially when it is useful in providing a grace period during which a peaceful, and agreed solution to the underlying causes of these problems may be found.

In the case of Haiti, my Government is particularly gratified that an agreement was reached which allowed for the landing of multinational forces in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolution and without the trauma of an invasion by force. We believe, none the less, that Haiti's problems will be solved only when all aspects of the Security Council resolution are fully implemented and, in terms of socio-economic issues, provided the international community helps eradicate the causes of the poverty and backwardness which persist there.

With respect to the situation in the fraternal Republic of Cuba, we believe that the causes underlying the conflict must be addressed. For this reason, my Government favours reforms which, through the exercise of self-determination, would guarantee the establishment of a multi-party democracy there. Furthermore, my Government is in favour of lifting the economic embargo that is such a burden on that country. Only by acting simultaneously on both fronts will it be possible to overcome this crisis. We are fully ready to assist the fraternal Caribbean nation of Cuba.

With the conclusion of the cold war, the world is focusing most of its attention on other problems, new and old, which now make up the world agenda - problems such as the current restructuring of systems of economic relations and international politics.

It must be stressed that in the handling of the phenomena known as "globalization", it is vital to establish a new order which will take into account the realities, interests, sovereign rights, and just aspirations of the small countries and the developing nations in general. Any development which, out of selfishness, indifference, inattention, or the like, fails to meet this requirement, will inevitably condemn us to a world riddled with yet further imbalance, marginalization and instability.

Mankind's hopes for the twenty-first century will be realized only if together we are able to build a much fairer, more equitable and more balanced future. This applies to all countries, be they rich or poor, weak or strong.

Specifically, such a future requires that we embark immediately on a vigorous programme of common and coordinated actions to eradicate mankind's greatest problem: poverty. Panama declares again today, before the Assembly, that it is willing to join the international programmes to combat poverty and promote solidarity and social equity, as well as those aimed at promoting a better quality of life for the sectors that are most deprived and least fairly treated. In particular, Panama will commit itself to efforts to improve the social situation of the family and of women and children.

In respect of this universal aspiration, women in Panama have already attained positions of relative importance in both political and professional arenas. Today, for the first time in the history of our Republic, the deserving President of our legislative organ is a woman who is a popular leader, while in our last elections another prominent female politician was a candidate for the presidency of the Republic of Panama, and she now leads the major opposition party. We are also proud to see Panamanian professional women serving in the Cabinet of Mr. Ernesto Pérez Balladares and as judges on our Supreme Court of Justice. In short, women in Panama play a leading and powerful role in all aspects of our political and private life, and they are often at the forefront of our technical, scientific and professional development. For this reason we shall continue to support actions that make it possible for women to achieve full and effective equality of rights and opportunities in an increasingly competitive world.

On another question, my country has decided to tackle firmly and unequivocally the problems of drug-trafficking, money-laundering and terrorism. We are currently devising a strategy to combat these terrible evils that imperil the very existence of our nations. We favour the development of joint, coordinated action on the international level. The community of nations faces a great challenge in these grave problems, and we fervently appeal to the Governments and the peoples of Latin America to create a powerful organization to combat them.

In another area, Panama is particularly attentive to the discussions aimed at defining a new role for the United Nations and the corresponding structural reforms this world Organization requires. With regard specifically to the structure of the United Nations, Panama believes it is necessary to increase the representativity of its most important decision-making bodies. In particular, my country believes that the Security Council must be enlarged. Panama wishes to reiterate that, whatever approach is taken, Latin America's participation in that body should be increased and Latin American countries should be given consideration as possible permanent members.

I am pleased to state that the new democratic Government of Panama fully accepts the commitment to bolster and enhance its presence in international agencies, where it is a Latin American and Caribbean voice that remains faithful to the rightful aspirations of the developing countries. This decision is reflected in the speech delivered by Ernesto Pérez Balladares when he was sworn in as my country's President. He said:

> "This is the new face that Panama is showing to its friends abroad. We are no longer at the stage of seeking solidarity on the Canal Treaty in order to regain the benefits of our geographic position. Now

we want to begin our participation in the new world that is challenging us all and to make known the potentialities of our geographic position, our desire to take advantage of all opportunities properly, fairly and respectfully, in the pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy free of complexes and capable of helping us surmount the challenges of the next century. We are friends to all. We are foes of none."

We look with optimism on the development of mankind and, in particular, that of my country. We will pass the baton to our young people on our country's path of progress, peace and justice.

Finally, on this occasion I also take pleasure in wishing you, Mr. President, every success in your task of leading the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.